



**Warner, Diane H., Tomlinson, Susan L., and Caswell, Kurt, eds. *To Everything on Earth: New Writing on Fate, Community, and Nature*. Lubbock: Texas Tech U P, 2010. Print.**

Although *To Everything on Earth* begins its Forward localized and contextualized at Texas Tech's campus in Lubbock, Texas, this compilation does not have the distinctly southwestern focus one might expect after looking through its editors' credentials. Indeed, in many ways *To Everything on Earth* remains surprisingly distinct from many environmental texts that saturate academic circles. Much of this comes from what I have loosely termed "a Barry Lopez perspective" that can be felt throughout each author's contribution. To be more specific, *To Everything on Earth* sets aside theoretical examinations, abstract ponderings, and pedantry, and instead allows room for human, rather than academic, voices to be expressed. William E. Tydeman recalls in his Introduction, "Barry once cautioned me 'to respect scholarship but avoid its tyrannies'" (xv). Lopez's advice seems to leave an impression on the remaining collection of stories that respect scholarship but attempt to use the force of narrative to consider moments of individual transformation as well as the highly personal impact of nature. As a result, *To Everything on Earth* says as much about the community as it does about nature.

Perhaps Barry Lopez says it best, once again, in his quoted material in this text. In the epigraph, the editors chose a selection from Lopez's "A Literature of Place," the beginning of which succinctly reminds us that, "The real topic of nature writing, I think, is not nature but the evolving structure of communities from which nature has been removed." In following, the narratives chosen for this book consider their various communities and changing relations to nature. *To Everything on Earth* therefore evokes Barry Lopez's *Arctic Dreams* rather than following in the steps of Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire*, where Abbey's family remains significantly absent from the text in his quest to discover the wilderness 'solitarily.' In these narratives, the land substantiates and refocuses one's relationships with others, mediates past memories of loved ones, and gives substance to the disruptions and interruptions of life.

Many narratives are heart-wrenching, such as Matt Daly's comparison of the charred landscape of Yellowstone after 1988 with the complex landscape of his own life as he and his wife, Cindy, struggle with her panic attacks. In suit, Joy Kennedy-O'Neill's rhizomatic narrative balances and then equates her love and experiences of caving with her fear of breast cancer as she visits a radiologist. Other narratives are more ethereal, such as Peter Friederici's "Working the Stone," in which he considers the pregnancy of the seemingly empty desert that confronts him with its "shedding of the past and the future" and "the immediacy of one's own bodily situation" (14). However, a repeating component, or perhaps question, throughout these narratives appears to evolve from Lisa Couturier's query that she asks herself in "In the Slipstream." As she rediscovers her past relationship with her father, a hunter and wildlife lover, and the surreal presence of geese within her life, she simply asks herself: "Geese: how do they enter?" (29). This question evolves throughout the narratives as each author looks at how nature enters their daily activities, their aspirations, their passions, and ultimately the schemas that structure and define their understanding of life.

These stories, nuanced and powerful, express the force of both nature and narrative in the everyday life. For those looking to feel the omnipresence of nature once again, rather than

consider it through a more removed lens, this collection will provide compelling reminders as to why we love nature in the first place.

*--Stephanie Lyells, Washington State University*